

In Which There are Always Wednesday Afternoon Walks by the-singular-peep

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Summary: Eleven has a schedule, and she likes it that way. Ever since she was reunited with her boys, El has been busy. No matter how busy she gets, though, Wednesday afternoons will always be her favorite. [IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS OKAY SERIES. COMPLETE. PT 9/?. PT 8: "IN WHICH THE BOYS ARE HER BOYS."]

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January 16, 1985. Wednesday.

Hopper's favorite part of the week had to be the Wednesday afternoon walks through the woods with his daughter.

It hadn't been even close to a year yet, and already Eleven was getting antsy. She wanted to go outside, to be free, to see her friends. But she couldn't do that all the time, not yet, and so they came up with a compromise.

Saturdays were friend days, and the boys could come to the house from noon to six. On Tuesday and Thursday, Eleven would spend the day with Mrs. Wheeler and Holly from eight am to six pm while Hopper was at work, because he didn't like to leave her all by herself very much anymore. Friday Evenings Mike would come over for dinner. And Wednesday afternoons, at three PM, Hopper would come home early and they would go on a walk. Not out in public or anything, but through the woods. They would hold hands and walk amongst the trees and talk about their days. Hopper cherished these days, because on these days he got to see Eleven's eyes light up in the afternoon sunlight, and he got to see her happier than he normally saw her. And she would always hold his hand, without fail. It made him feel warm, even if it was only a temporary arrangement until she could leave the house on her own.

Hopper didn't like to think about that. Instead, he relished Wednesdays when he would be greeted at the door by Eleven barreling into him with a hug, shouting his name as she ran down the hallway, because she was just so happy he was home. He loved those hugs.

Today was no different.

The locks clicked open, Hopper stepped in, and instantly was greeted by -

"hhhhhhhHHHHHOOOOOOOOOPPPPPPP!" Eleven screeched, running at him and flinging her thin arms around his middle. Hopper laughed, as usual, and ruffled her mop of brown curls.

"Missed you too, kiddo. You doing alright?" He asked. She looked up at him and grinned, a sure sign that she was.

She was dressed carefully in a new outfit collected from Nancy's hand me downs, a white long-sleeved turtle neck with pink roses and a navy blue jumper dress that reached just above her knees with a little red belt at the waist. She paired it with some too-big white socks and her old white Converse, the ones she always wore for their walks.

"Ready!" She said cheerfully as she stepped back. Hopper smiled too.

"Alright, let me grab somethin' to eat and we'll head out."

Eleven sat as patiently as she could at the table as Hopper ate a ham sandwich and she stole his chips, but by the time he was halfway done she was swinging her feet impatiently and was ready to go.

"Go!" She said, being too excited to think about word choice. "Go, go outside now!"

Hopper looked up from his meal and quirked an eyebrow.

"Say that again?"

Eleven sighed. She knew now that she could talk however she wanted, especially if it was something she needed, but she also knew that Hopper liked her to work on her sentences when it was just something she *wanted*. She tried again.

"Hop, please can I go on a walk with you." She said slowly, each word divided into syllables so she could make sure to get it right. Talking was just so *hard*. Hopper grinned and plopped his sandwich down on the plate before wiping his hands together.

"Alright, go get your coat on. It's like forty degrees out, and we don't need you getting sick."

Eleven grinned and ran as fast as she could to her room to grab the

brown coat that was only slightly too big on her.

"Ready!" She yelled, out of breath as she stopped at the door. Hopper was slightly behind her, grabbing his hat and coat.

"Alright, alright, we're going."

El hopped out the door, laughing as she skipped.

"Hey, now, what's our rule?" Hopper called after her. Eleven stopped, turned around, and dashed back to take Hopper's hand. She grinned up at him, her eyes fixed on his nose, and he smiled back.

They walked in silence for a good five minutes, until they were moderately deep into the woods and 1/3 of the way down their newly-tramped-down path, before Hopper spoke.

"So, how was your day?" He said, careful to squeeze Eleven's hand first so he wouldn't startle her. He loved these walks, because it was one of the only times he got to talk to her with no distractions and no attitude, the other being while he read her her nightly stories. Eleven screwed up her mouth, thinking long and hard about her answer. Hopper smiled. He was used to that little face - it was the one that meant she wanted to answer truthfully, and that she was going to go into detail so she needed time to think about the words. He loved that little face.

"Good." She said, nodding her head for punctuation. "Watched Ses-ame Street. Ate all my food in the morning. Drew two whole pictures," She held up her fingers and looked to Hopper before continuing, "Took a shower. Watched *As The World Turns*. Dusty kissed on Meg today. Lily said that was 'cheat-ing'. Dunno what that means." She paused and thought a moment more before her face lit up. "Oh! Saw a weird dog. Outside. On the window."

Hopper chuckled at her excitement. And at her misuse of "on".

"Oh yeah? What kinda dog?"

There was that face again.

"Uhm.. Big.." She took her hand from his and held her fingers up at

her head beside her ears. "Big... horns?" She questioned. "No toes."

At that, Hopper straight up laughed. Eleven jumped a little.

"A deer. You saw a deer, kid." He said after he caught his breath. Eleven made a little face.

"Deer." She repeated, then smiled. She looked back up to Hopper. "Saw a deer!" She paused. "Hop?"

"Hmm?" Hopper thrummed, looking up at the sky. It was awfully blue and pretty for such a cold day, and for that he was grateful. From what he could gather, Eleven loved the sunshine.

"Love you," She said, hopping over a stick in a very exaggerated manner and making a little "oof" sound as she hit the ground again.

Hopper grinned again and shook his head.

"Love you too, kid,"